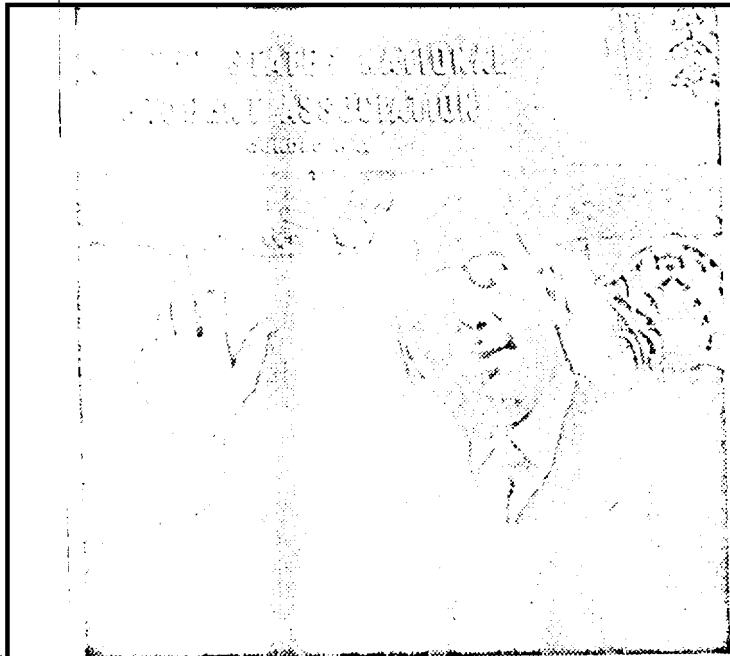


'Warm, Open' Scholar

Wayne Eugene Groves



United Press International Telephoto

Suddenly the target of criticism ... and sympathy
(Mr. Groves outside N.S.A. headquarters in Washington)

CPYRGHT

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 15 -- W. (for Wayne) Eugene Groves is described by his young friends in Washington as a left-of-center liberal and by his mother back home in Indiana as a Republican.

Whatever his political leanings, 23-year-old Mr. Groves, all agree, is a bright young man with great promise. He was a Rhodes scholar last year, studying economics and politics, and looking toward a career of college teaching.

His interest in student politics and educational reform led him to interrupt his studies at Oxford after one year and return here to become the full-time president, for a year, of the National Student Association.

He was at the association headquarters on S Street, surrounded by earnest, long-haired girls and earnest, sophisticated young men when the news came out this week that the organization had been covertly taking money for years from the Central Intelligence Agency.

That meant that for months Mr. Groves had kept from his trusted and trusting friends what one of them described today as "this supersecret." Not that he had much choice, once he had taken his turn, like past association presidents, at pledging secrecy in return for being told precisely where his organization got its money.

His friends are not sure in what condition Mr. Groves will emerge from the controversy.

"He might end up a hero, or he might be impeached," one says.

The association's constitution requires officers to report all sources of money to the National Board of Supervisors. Mr. Groves obviously did not do that.

Phil Wordell, editor of Moderator, a magazine for student leaders and a friend of Mr. Groves for three years, says there is talk in the association of impeaching the president for violating the constitution.

At the same time, he said, there is sympathy for his predicament.

Mr. Wordell says Mr. Groves was seriously disturbed over the consequences of the disclosure of the involvement of the intelligence agency and over the failure of his attempts to cut the ties with the agency earlier.

He said Mr. Groves was a "warm and open" person who, like most leaders of the National Student Association through the years, has been a firm believer in open, vigorous political debate. It has gone against the grain of the young man to have to keep the secret to himself and not consult his friends about it, Mr. Wordell said.

The tension and turmoil have been such that Mr. Groves, normally strong and self-assured, has been seen to weep four or five times in recent days.

"A student organization like this is built on a trust relationship," Mr. Wordell said. "Now, every new disclosure of information breaks that."

Mr. Groves is an athletic, dark-haired man who habitually wears a dark suit with a vest. He is articulate and enjoys the give-and-take of hard, intellectual debate.

He is also, Mr. Wordell says, "very non-ideological" despite his preference for liberal politics.

Mr. Groves is the only child of Mr. and Mrs. Ulysses Groves of Columbia City, Ind. The father is a carpenter and builder. Mrs. Groves is active in the Evangelical United Brethren Church and is president of the local Cancer Society.

Eugene Groves was valedictorian of his class and president of the student organization in high school. He was a member of the track team at the University of Chicago where he studied physics and was graduated in 1965. He was head of the student organization there.

Columbia City, where he lived all his life until going away to school, has a population of 5,500.

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